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AF/W FOR BOOTH, FRENCH  
AF/RAS FOR ENGLE, BITTRICK

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TAGS: [PREL](#), [MASS](#), [MARR](#), [XY](#), [NI](#), [ECOWAS](#)  
SUBJECT: ECOWAS: POSITIVE REACTIONS TO WASP

REF: ABUJA 1185

Classified by CDA ANDREWS; Reason 1.5 (b).

1. (U) During April 12 discussions on plans for future peace support programs for Africa (reftel), AF/RAS Greg Engle briefed ECOWAS Deputy Executive Secretary Chiekh Diarra and his staff on the West African Stabilization Program (WASP). Diarra's office at the Secretariat now includes Military Program Officer Colonel Dixon Dikio, Director for Child Protection Programs Ibrahim Diouf, Operations Center Director Florence Iheme, and Political Affairs Advisor Frank Afanyiarossou. Diarra said he would finish hiring six additional senior directors by the end of May, and planned to have other professional staff hired shortly thereafter.

2. (U) Engle briefed on the ECOWAS/GOSL logistics training depot (to be located in Freetown), the EUCOM-led C3 assistance for the ECOWAS Operations Center (based in the Secretariat), the possibility of a regional NCO training

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center initiative and other bilateral assistance that could have positive impact both for sub-regional bilateral partners as well as ECOWAS (including MTTs). Diarra responded very positively to the plans.

3. (C) Diarra and Dikio expressed concerns regarding the placement of the depot in Freetown. While accepting that the USG was responding to a window of opportunity (since the equipment is already in Freetown), they wondered about possible support for the ECOWAS equipment based presently in Lagos, and the impact of possible instability in Sierra Leone. Dikio also noted that it was extremely important that the transfer of ownership of the depot and equipment be made extremely clear through written agreement among the parties, to prevent any disagreements between the USG, ECOWAS and the GOSL as to the ownership of the equipment and facilities. The visiting team and ECOWAS officials were satisfied that these issues could be resolved.

4. (U) Diarra said he would raise the WASP plans at the next meeting of the ECOWAS Defense and Security Committee (ECOWAS Chiefs of Defense Staff) in May, to build the necessary member-state understanding and support for the program. He noted that this meeting would also consider a training policy for the ECOWAS peacekeeping stand-by units.

5. (C) COMMENT: Dikio's concern regarding ownership is understandable. We will need to make these modalities very clear, or an excellent program of support could quickly turn into a disagreement between the organization and one of its member-states. The Secretariat will likely need to present the logistical depot plan and other WASP items to the member-states on a political level to ensure the needed acceptance and support for these programs. However, an important first step -- obtaining the ECOWAS Secretariat's buy-in -- has been accomplished. END COMMENT.  
Andrews